00099080

GOD
.95479
m/Lec
9080

00099080

Digitized with financial assistance from
Shri Brihad Bhartiya Samaj
on 11 March, 2020

THE BOMBAY CITY IMPROVEMENT TRUST

FROM

1898 to 1909.

A LECTURE DELIVERED BY

Mr. J. P. ORR, I.C.S.,

Before the Bombay Association of Architects and Surveyors

On 12th DECEMBER 1910.

Bombay:
PRINTED AT THE TIMES PRESS.
1911

Two lectures dealing with the Bombay City Improvement Trust's work up to January 1905 & April 1909 respectively are sent herewith to all to whom the Trust's Annual reports are supplied.

J. F. ORR,
CHAIRMAN.
Bombay City Improvement Trust.

8th November 1913.

This lecture has been printed with a view to meeting to some extent the demand for information as to why the Bombay City Improvement Trust was created and what it has done.

The footnotes are to be read as of the date of this slip.

J. P. ORR,
CHAIRMAN,
BOMBAY CITY IMPROVEMENT TRUST.

31st March 1913.

99080

Bom/Lec
99080

THE

BOMBAY CITY IMPROVEMENT TRUST.

1898-1909.

In the early part of 1897, consequent on the outbreak of plague in Bombay, the Government of Bombay took into their serious consideration the question of a comprehensive scheme for the improvement of the City of Bombay, more especially in respect to the better ventilation of the densely inhabited parts, the removal of insanitary dwellings, and the prevention of overcrowding.

The outcome of their deliberations was that on 9th November 1898 the Bombay City Improvement Trust came into existence, entrusted under the City of Bombay Improvement Act (Bombay Act IV of 1898), with the work of making new streets, opening out crowded localities, reclaiming lands from the sea to provide room for the expansion of the City, and constructing sanitary dwellings for the poor and for the police.

The Board consisted of—

Chairman :

Mr. W. C. Hughes, M.Inst.C.E.

Ex-Officio Trustees :

The General Officer Commanding Bombay District.

The Collector of Land Revenue, Customs and Opium, Bombay.

The Municipal Commissioner for the City of Bombay.

Elected Trustees :

By the Corporation—

The Hon'ble Mr. BHALCHANDRA KRISHNA BHATAWADEKAR.

Mr. DINSHA EDALJI WACHA.

Mr. IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA.

Mr. ACCACIO G. VIEGAS.

By the Chamber of Commerce—

The Hon'ble Mr. R. H. MAÇAULAY.

By the Bombay Port Trust—

The Hon'ble Mr. C. T. BURKE, M.Inst.C.E.

By the Millowners' Association—

Mr. SASSOON J. DAVID.

Nominated Trustees :

Mr. G. A. ANDERSON.

Mr. T. BLANEY, C.I.E.

Mr. P. B. SAVILE.

The constitution of the Board has remained unchanged. Sir Walter Hughes was Chairman for 2 years and thereafter was continuously on the Board as the Port Trust's representative till he retired in May 1910. Sir Sassoon J. David has always represented the Millowners' Association and Sir Bhalchandra and Messrs. Wacha and Ibrahim, the Municipality.

The Board's first four schemes are thus described in their first annual report :—

Scheme No. 1.—The First Nagpada Improvement Scheme for dealing with the insanitary portion of the area lying between Bellasis Junction and Parel Roads south of Shepherd Road, containing a population of 11,133, chiefly of the labouring classes. The scheme comprised the construction on certain vacant land within the area and elsewhere of new sanitary dwellings for the poorer and working classes, the purchase of nearly the whole of the property comprised in the area (omitting

the Police Lines and Jewish Synagogue), the formation of wide new streets opening up the area, and, ultimately, the entire reconstruction and re-arrangement of the houses within the area on the principle of giving a sufficiency of light and air to every street, every house and every room.

*Scheme No. 2.**—For forming a new line of street running from the Queen's Road, south of the Hindu cremation ground, to the foot of the Carnac Bridge and of four cross streets, for remedying the defective ventilation of the area lying between the Esplanade Cross Road and New Hanuman Lane. The scheme comprised the formation of, in all, 6,172 running feet of new streets, 40 feet in width, running for the most part through back lanes and alleys, and the acquisition in connection therewith, with a view to their reconstruction, of extensive areas of badly built, overcrowded and insanitary properties lying on both sides of the lines of roads.

Scheme No. 3.†—For forming a new line of street running straight across the island from Back Bay to the Docks starting from the Queen's Road at Chaupati and ending at the Elphinstone Bridge on the G. I. P. Railway. The length is 9,100 feet and the width of street proposed is 80 feet. The purpose of the scheme is to remedy the defective ventilation of the parts of the City traversed by it and to increase the existing means of communication and facilities for traffic. It comprises the acquisition of extensive areas of properties on both sides of the line of new street with a view to their reconstruction with a sufficiency of air space and on sanitary principles.

Scheme No. 4.‡—For the formation of lines of street opening up the area lying between Chaupati and the Gowalia Tank Road and the acquisition in connection

* Now known as Princess Street Scheme.
† " " Sandhurst Road "
‡ " " Gamdevi Road "

therewith of the areas abutting on such streets, the purpose of the scheme being to provide building sites for the expansion of the City and to create new and increase existing means of communication.

These four schemes were duly notified in December 1898.

It was estimated that in the Nagpada operations 2,600 persons would be displaced, and the first step in the execution of the scheme was to erect buildings for their accommodation. These were to be provided, partly on vacant land within the scheme area and partly on land vesting in the Trust on the Agripada Estate in the same neighbourhood.

Accordingly a plan was prepared on the principle of restricting the density of the population to 500 persons per acre, restricting the height of chawls or houses to a ground and two upper floors, allowing each adult a superficial area within the house of 40 square feet, and arranging the buildings in every case in such a way as to provide ample air space. Wherever possible the buildings were to be arranged to form the sides of a quadrangle with an interior courtyard. In such cases openings were to be left to provide amply for through ventilation. The courtyards were to be paved and well drained.

Deliberations and preliminary arrangements in connection with these four schemes and with the laying out of the Government and Municipal land vested in the Board for development, more particularly the Marine Lines, the Wellington Lines and the Agripada Estate occupied the Board till 1st April 1899 when their first complete official year commenced.

1899-1900.

In this first year the First Nagpada Improvement Scheme was sanctioned by Government, and the Board

notified Schemes V (Dadar-Matunga) and VI (Matunga-Sion) in connection with which the following quotation from the annual report for 1899-1900 is interesting:—

> "The purpose of these schemes is to provide space for the expansion of the City and to encourage and largely develop the migration of the population to the suburbs which is already in progress on a considerable scale. The overcrowding, which is so great an evil in a large part of the City, will, it is hoped, thereby be materially lessened.
>
> An important aid to this result is the enforcement of more stringent regulations relating to the height of buildings in streets and the minimum amount of air space to be provided in connection with dwelling houses. The present regulations are in these respects unquestionably defective. The matter lies at the root of the evil of overcrowding, and the Board have made a representation to the Corporation and Government urging the necessity for bringing the regulations as applied alike to buildings to be erected, re-erected or materially altered, into line with the most recent examples of the requirements of recognized sanitary principles. Government have replied suggesting the appointment of a Joint Committee to consider the question."

In connection with Schemes V and VI the Board undertook a complete survey of the North of the Island (some 6½ square miles). This work was commenced by Mr. Tapsell on 1st February 1900 and was completed in May 1902.

The chief expenditure of the Trust's first year was on the laying out of Government lands (chiefly Hornby Road and Chaupati) and the filling in of Municipal lands at Agripada vested in the Trust. Seven plots in

Wellington Lines and three on Hornby Road were leased and the filling in of the N.-E. quarter of Agripada Estate reserved for chals was nearly completed by the end of the year. The foundation stone of the first block of dwellings was laid at Agripada on the 9th November 1899 by His Excellency the Governor (Lord Sandhurst) in the presence of His Excellency the Viceroy (Lord Curzon) and a large assembly of leading citizens; and four blocks were a-building by the end of the year.

1900-01.

In the Board's second year, 1900-01, these four blocks were nearly completed. The survey of the North of the Island and the filling in of the northern half of the Agripada Estate were completed and a commencement was made in demolition, 21 properties in Nagpada being demolished. Scheme II (Princess Street) and IV (Gamdevi) were sanctioned by Government in January and March 1901, respectively. It is interesting to note that Princess Street was, according to the Trust's original proposals, to be only 40 feet wide; at the instance of the Corporation the width was increased to 60 feet; and Government in sanctioning the scheme recommended the Trust to increase it to 80 feet. As constructed, Princess Street is 80 feet broad from Queen's Road to Kalbadevi Road, 128 feet broad in the circus between Kalbadevi Road and Lohar Chal Street, and 60 feet broad from there to the Juma Musjid, while Lohar Chal Street is 50 feet broad and all the cross roads are 40 feet broad.

Scheme IV (Gamdevi) was originally called the Gowalia Tank Scheme and included the filling in of the Tank, but the Corporation objected to this work on the ground that they had decided to attempt the improvement of Gowalia Tank by means of the sulphate of copper treatment. So in 1906 the northern boundary

of the scheme was set back from the Gowalia Tank Road to a parallel line along the southern boundary of the Tank. The Corporation have now changed their views and the tank * will probably be filled in soon by the Corporation themselves.

It will further be noticed from the plan, that in the original Scheme IV, what is now Hughes Road was to have been prolonged southwards keeping close to the west of the Railway and entering Kennedy Sea Face at the Chaupati Level Crossing. The original idea was to make this road only 40 feet broad, but before submitting the notified scheme to Government for sanction, the Board decided to make the breadth 60 feet and the road has been constructed accordingly.

The other three notified schemes (3, 5 & 6, *i.e.*, Sandhurst Road, Dadar-Matunga and Matunga-Sion) remained throughout 1900-01 in the stage of discussion and revision, but a good deal of work was done on Government lands and 11 more plots were leased in the Hornby Road and Marine Lines Estate, while Kennedy Sea Face, which has always been a drag on the Trust's finances cost the Board Rs. 18,115 in repairs and maintenance.

1901-02.

The Trust's third year, 1901-02, was marked by the notification of Schemes VII (Colaba Reclamation) and VIII (Mandvi-Koliwada Improvement Scheme), the commencement of road making in the north of the Agripada Estates, the filling in of the southern half of Agripada Estate, the commencement of the construction of the Board's offices and the completion and occupation of the first four Blocks of Chals at Agripada in August 1901.

The Cooperage Road along the east of the Cooperage and the new Nagpada Street in Nagpada, both

* This work was commenced in October 1911.

commenced and completed in 1901-02, were the first fruits of the Trust's work in the way of improvement of communications. The only other important work completed in 1901-02 was the concrete sea wall put up on Kennedy Sea Face in place of the old wooden crib work which had been destroyed during the monsoon of 1900 for a length of 200 feet.

In November 1901 Government sanctioned Scheme III (Sandhurst Road).

The chief administrative work of the year 1901-02 was the framing of building by-laws. This is referred to in the annual report as follows :—

> "As a preliminary to the disposal of lands for building purposes it was necessary for the Trustees to frame building by-laws for adoption in the cleared areas, because the existing local regulations in this behalf are not sufficiently stringent to insure the construction of sanitary dwellings, The principal alteration made by the Trustees relates to the regulation of the heights of buildings with reference to adjacent open spaces, the ventilation of all parts of dwellings intended for human habitation, the prevention of damp in ground floor rooms, the height of rooms, the nature of the partitions between rooms, the insurance of sufficient open space at the back of all buildings for the purpose of ventilation and for the location of latrines, &c., &c. There is no doubt that the existing defects in the local by-laws will be remedied when the Corporation undertake the next revision, but in the meantime the Trustees had to deal with these matters in advance to meet the requirements of immediate building operations in the cleared area."

The following interesting remarks on the Nagpada Improvement Scheme are taken from the same report:—

"The History of London Street Improvements shows that after 40 to 50 years' experience in making improvements in London, the execution of a scheme, of a size similar to that of the Trustees' Nagpada Improvement Scheme, is rarely, if ever, carried out in a less period than 10 years from the date of notification. The Nagpada Scheme has been completed in less than 3½ years from the first constitution of the Trust. The total area dealt with by this scheme is 74,600 square yards. It was occupied by 168 separately assessed properties crowded together without regard to ventilation and served only by very narrow tortuous passages. The buildings were chiefly let in one-room tenements. It was found during acquisition that many of the properties were held from the free-holder on condition that on demand the buildings should be removed and the cleared sites be made over to the free-holder. It is scarcely to be wondered at that with such a condition the lease-holders put up the most miserable structures at a minimum cost. Besides the overcrowding of the buildings, such as they were, no regard was given to the need of forming roads at suitable levels within the area, and as a result this area formed a depression lying within the surrounding Municipal Roads; drainage was impracticable, the lanes and passages were filled with either storm-water or sullage, according to the time of the year, and any attempt at raising their levels resulted in the ground floors of the dwellings being flooded. The consequence of this state of things was that 1st Nagpada had the unenviable notoriety of being the unhealthiest

area in Bombay. The death-rate per mille in the years 1896 to 1901 was as follows :—

1896.	1897.	1898.	1899.	1900.	1901.
40·42	59·10	61·62	76·70	138·50	92·37

During the plague epidemics of 1896-1897 to 1900-1901, this area furnished 1,373 victims out of a population of about 11,000 persons."

At the Census of 1906 the population of Nagpada was only 3,335, and the death-rate since then has been in 1907, 38 ; in 1908, 47 ; in 1909, 55 ; in 1910 up to date 48 per 1,000 persons. *

Forty-one sites were leased on the Trust's estates in 1901-02, mostly in Hornby Road, Marine Lines and Wodehouse Road. A beginning was made in Agripada, where five sites were leased.

1902-03.

The following excerpts from the annual report show the progress made in the Board's 4th year (1902-03) :—

The first Scheme undertaken by the Board, the Nagpada Improvement Scheme, has been practically completed ; all the roads have been constructed ; about one-half of the building sites have been leased for rebuilding purposes, and the work of reconstruction is in hand. Plans showing the way this area was formerly covered with buildings and the method adopted in laying out the improved area are attached to this report.

The acquisition of properties in connection with Scheme No. II (Queen's Road to Carnac Bridge) has been almost completed. A plan is attached showing the sanctioned Scheme and the large number of properties which had to be acquired. Demolition of acquired properties was in progress during the year.

* It should however be explained that the population has steadily increased with new buildings in Nagpada since 1906.

Considerable progress has also been made in the acquisition of properties for Scheme III (Port Trust Estate to Chaupati) and Scheme IV (Gowalia Tank Scheme).

The Scheme formulated for the reclamation of a part of Colaba, extending from the Wodehouse Bridge to the Panday Sanitarium, was sanctioned by Government during the year, the contract was let at favourable rates and work was commenced.

Schemes for the accommodation of a large number of the Police Force at sites in the Nagpada Improvement Scheme and in the Board's Wodehouse Road Estate, were prepared and sanctioned by Government.

It was in 1902-03 that the Board's proposal to amend Scheme II by making the main street 80 feet wide as far as Kalbadevi Road was sanctioned by Government, the Board having decided that the cost of increasing the width beyond 80 feet further east would be prohibitive. The Sankli Street Extension Scheme (IX) was prepared during the year, and the survey of the north of the Island was completed in May 1902.

The Mandvi Koliwada Improvement Scheme, which deals with the insanitary area in which plague was worst in its earliest days and in which the annual recrudescence of plague always occurred first, was sanctioned by Government in September 1902.

The following excerpts from the annual report regarding the progress up to the end of 1902-03 in leasing and demolition and reconstruction are interesting :—

" Agreements with 113 intending lessees have been entered into so far to build upon lands either vested in or acquired by the Board. The rents payable in respect of these leased sites amount to

Rs. 1,19,030 per annum at initial rates, and in addition the Trustees have obtained Rs. 51,000 during 1902-03 for the temporary use of lands not yet leased. The total value of buildings demolished by the Board in connection with their Schemes is Rs. 13,50,000. The total value of new buildings already erected or agreed to be erected on sites leased by the Board and new buildings erected or under construction by the Board is about Rs. 80,00,000, of which buildings of a value of Rs. 12,00,000 are exclusively for the poor, while all the others have a large amount of accommodation for servants and dependants who would otherwise have to find quarters in the crowded parts of the City."

Forty-one sites were leased in 1902-03, including 12 in Agripada and 22 in Nagpada—the beginning of reconstruction under Trust rules.

1903-04.

The Trust's 5th year, 1903-04, was like 1902-03 marked by little in the way of actual completion of projects; but the ground was cleared for expediting acquisition proceedings; Police Accommodation Schemes were prepared for Sheppard Road (XVIII) and Agripada (XIX) and small street schemes were prepared for the Agripada (XI), Connaught Road (XII), Crawford Market (XIII), Wellington Lines (XX) and Wodehouse Road Estates (XXI) and for Souter Street Extension eastwards; new chawls were commenced in Nagpada (in October 1903) and Agripada; fair progress was made with the filling in on Colaba Reclamation; some of the earlier schemes were revised; and the Sankli Street Scheme was sanctioned by Government.

The new works actually started during the year were—

Road south of Crawford Market, Scheme X.

Police Accommodation Scheme at Nagpada.

Police Accommodation Scheme at, Wodehouse Road.

The construction of the new Lohar Chawl Street.

The chief work completed during the year was that of special repairs to the Kennedy Sea Face, which had been very seriously damaged by the storms of 1902. The repairs cost half a lakh and included the construction of a pitched apron of heavy stones set in cement for a length of 1,200 feet.

Twenty-five plots were leased during the year: these included 17 in Nagpada, leaving only 10 more to be leased there.

Much time was devoted by the Trustees in 1903-04 to deliberations on the modification of Schemes II (Princess Street) and III (Sandhurst Road) and to the amendment of the Trust Act. A long list of amendments required, including a provision empowering the Trust to finance private schemes for the housing of workmen by their employers, was sent up to Government; eight years have passed: two amending Bills have been drafted and discussed at great length, but the Act remains unamended.

1904-05.

In the Board's 6th year, 1904-05, considerable progress was made with acquisition work, and consequently with the construction of Princess Street. Four blocks of chawls at Agripada, containing 288 rooms, each 9′×12′ were completed and occupied. The Trust's fine office was completed and occupied early in the year; the filling of the Colaba Reclamation was completed, the Cooperage was thrown open to the public as a recreation ground,

and work on the Sankli Street extension and on roads on the Connaught Road Estate and on the Sheppard Road Police Accommodation Scheme was commenced.

The small road and Police Accommodation Schemes, prepared in 1903-04, were all sanctioned by Government towards the end of 1904, and the Hornby Road Street Scheme and the Duncan Road Police Accommodation Scheme were prepared and sanctioned during the year. Important changes were also made in Scheme II. The chief of these were the exclusion of certain shops along Shaik Memon Street on the score of expense and the inclusion of land for chawl sites. Scheme III was also altered with the sanction of Government, mainly with a view to secure Nawab Kamal Khan's property for chawl sites.

Only 15 plots were leased in the year, 9 in Nagpada and 6 in Wellington Lines.

1905-06.

The Board's 7th year, 1905-06, saw great progress made in several directions; but it was chiefly memorable as that in which the first of the large Street Schemes (Scheme II, from Queen's Road to Carnac Bridge) was formally opened by Their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales, the main street being, by gracious permission, named "Princess Street." The portion from Queen's Road to the bifurcation beyond Kalbadevi Road was completed in time for the opening ceremony on 10th November (7 years after Notification.)

The extension of Sankli Street and the new road South of the Crawford Market were completed during the year and the filling in Scheme IV was commenced on 21st February 1906 and completed within 12 months.

The Sandhurst Bridge was commenced by the B. B. & C. I. Railway in December 1905 and this led to the

preparation of Scheme XXVII, as explained in the annual report thus :—

> " The commencement during the year by the B. B. & C. I. Railway of the new overbridge at Chaupati, which is in connection with the Board's 80 feet road (Scheme III), necessitated the early preparation of a Scheme for a road connecting its eastern approach with the Queen's Road, in view of the fact that on the completion of this bridge the Railway Company will have the right to close the existing Chaupati Level Crossing. A Scheme has accordingly been approved by the Board (Mathew Road Scheme) and has since been submitted to Government for sanction with this object. It provides, in addition to the main road, a branch road, crossing the Board's Scheme III and proceeding in a northerly direction to Girgaum Back Road, opposite Chunam Kiln Road, which will thus give direct communication to Gilder Street and the north of the Island."

Another important scheme notified early in 1906 was Scheme XXIX (Nowroji Hill Scheme), which is thus described in the annual report :—

> " A Scheme for the improvement of the Nowroji Hill District, including Chinch Bunder and Vandekar Lane, which formed the first of the series of representations received from the Commissioner last year, was adopted by the Board, and the necessary formalities have since been in progress with a view to its submission to Government for sanction. This Scheme deals with a notoriously insanitary area and will afford the opportunity for a much-needed widening of part of Dongri Street, which is at present very greatly congested with traffic."

The 8 new blocks of chawls at Agripada (640 rooms) and 2 blocks at Nagpada (144 rooms) were completed and occupied. The construction of 6 blocks at Chandanwadi (672 rooms) was commenced in October 1905 and vigorously pushed forward, while the foundations for 6 blocks at Imamwada in connection with Scheme III (876 rooms) were commenced towards the close of the year.

The Police Accommodation Schemes at First Nagpada, Wodehouse Road and Shephard Road were completed and occupied during the year ; the Scheme for the Agripada Estate was commenced ; and the Princess Street Police Accommodation Scheme was prepared and notified. The 3 completed schemes provide accommodation for 9 officers and 284 men with stabling for 19 horses.

Advantage was taken of surplus filling available from other estates to raise a considerable portion of the low-lying area on the Cooperage Plot, which is thus very much improved. The garden in the interior of the Wellington Lines Estate was completed and has proved a very attractive feature.

The construction of roads on the Connaught Road Estate was completed in February 1906.

39 plots were leased during the year including the first 7 of Connaught Road Estate and the first 18 of Princess Street Estate.

1906-07.

In the Board's 8th year, 1906-07, 4 important Schemes which had been notified in earlier years were sanctioned and declared :—

Date of sanction.

31-3-06 ... Scheme VI.—(Sion-Matunga Street Scheme) declared on 24th May 1906.

Date of sanction.

2-5-06 ... Scheme V.—(Dadar-Matunga Street Scheme) declared on 14th June 1906.

5-7-06 ... „ XXVII.—(Mathew Road Street Scheme) declared on 16th August 1906.

12-12-06 ... „ XXIX.—(Nowroji Hill Improvement Scheme) declared on 17th January 1906.

It was in 1906-07 also that the Gamdevi Scheme was modified by the exclusion of the Gowalia Tank, and Scheme XXX, described below, was prepared (extension of Souter Street Westwards). More than six years had been spent since the original notification of Schemes V and VI in discussions between Government, the Trust and the G. I. P. Railway Co., as to what should be the limits of these Schemes, the chief bones of contention being the land required by the Railway for their workshops and the Harbour Branch Railway and the question whether the Mahim Woods should be developed in this scheme or separately or not at all.

It is interesting to compare successive plans of Scheme V (Dadar-Matunga). The one published with the 1899-1900 report shows the area of the existing scheme extended right across both railways to the middle of Mahim Woods with a park of 48 acres projecting from Naskeh Tank to the sea shore. By 1901-02 this had at the instance of Government been reduced by the omission of all west of the B. B. & C. I. Railway, and the plan attached to the 1901-02 report still shows the area between the 2 railways as included in the scheme, the intention being to locate works for the bacteriological disposal of the sewage of the North of the Island there; but the Government sanction given in February 1902

extended only to the part of the Scheme east of the G. I. P. Railway. This sanction was found to be illegal, and four more years were spent in discussion as to whether the land between the Railways should be included in the Scheme or not. Ultimately this question was decided in the negative and in May 1906 the land between the Railways was made over to the G. I. P. Railway Company, who have filled it in and are constructing workshops, goods sidings and other works on it.

Acquisition work having progressed sufficiently, the Engineer was able to make considerable progress in 1906-07 with the construction of roads in the Princess Street, Sandhurst Road and Gamdevi Estates. Considerable progress was made on Hughes Road. The section of Sandhurst Road between Falkland Road and Duncan Road was commenced in June 1906 (nearly eight years after notification) and the section between Sandhurst Bridge and 7th Khetwadi Lane in January 1907. The chawl building work was pressed on with also, and six blocks of chals at Chandanwadi containing 672 rooms were completed and occupied.

Luckily for the Trust the laying out of Colaba Reclamation was completed just when, thanks to a good year for cotton mills, there was much money in the market and a good demand for land for investments, and no less than 30 of the 35 plots were leased at rents based on values averaging the high rate of Rs. 47 per square yard, besides 26 plots on other Estates including 18 in Princess Street Estate.

On the Agripada Estate the sewerage work was completed, and the water mains were laid on the greater part of the Estate.

The Agripada Roads were completed in July 1906, and towards the end of the year the Princess Street Police Accommodation Scheme was sanctioned and declared.

1907-08.

In the Board's 9th year, 1907-08, good progress was made with the construction of Sandhurst Road west of Duncan Road ; the section between Duncan Road and Falkland Road was completed and handed over to the Municipality in December 1907, and work was commenced between Parel Road and Dongri Street and between Falkland Road and 7th Khetwadi ; but in Scheme IV there was a serious setback on Hughes Road, owing to the Gibbs Road slip.

From the first, considerable difficulty had been experienced in the construction of the retaining walls in the Hughes Road cutting below the Gibbs Road, owing to the treacherous nature of the soil. One or two small slips had occurred ; but soon after the commencement of the rains (1907), a serious movement set in which destroyed the heavy retaining wall just completed and caused extensive damage to the Gibbs Road, which had, as a consequence, to be closed to the public for several months to their great inconvenience. The work of repair was commenced as soon as practicable after the rains, and it was found possible to re-open the Gibbs Road to the public before the end of the year.

In Scheme II, Princess Street was completed by its junction with Sheik Memon Street and the two cross roads were taken through to Carnac Road.

On the Colaba Reclamation, the one remaining road was completed and named 'Panday Road,' the Trustees of the Panday Sanitarium having contributed Rs. 18,500 towards its construction.

The construction of the semi-permanent camp on the area rented from the Military Department at the Bori Bunder Native Infantry Lines site enabled demolition in Scheme VIII to be undertaken and road-work to be commenced.

The construction of chawls for the poorer and working classes at Imamwada was continued during the year, and three of the blocks (444 rooms) were made available and were rapidly filled. A small chal containing 64 rooms was commenced on the ground behind plots 59-61, Princess Street and made good progress, and work on the Duncan Road Police Accommodation Scheme was started in December 1907.

Thirty-seven plots were leased during the year, including 14 in Princess Street and 14 at Agripada.

During the year a Scheme for the extension of Souter Street towards Tardeo (No. XXX) and the Parel-Street Scheme (No. XXXI) received the sanction of Government.

These schemes are described in the annual report as follows :—

> "The former of these is a small Scheme estimated to cost Rs. 2,41,934, its main object being to reclaim some low-lying land which, as it forms a stagnant pond for several months of the year, is a menace to the health of the inhabitants of the Board's West Agripada Estate. The Scheme will incidentally provide a few additional building sites in this neighbourhood and is expected to result in a net loss of Rs. 86,723. The Parel Street Scheme is the outcome of a suggestion made in 1903 by the late Municipal Commissioner, the Hon'ble Mr. W. L. Harvey, C.I.E., that a few small Street Schemes might be prepared to the North of Haines Road with a view to providing suitable sites in the neighbourhood of the Mills for the erection of accommodation for the industrial population. Investigations showed that the most satisfactory Scheme for this purpose would be the one to which sanction has now been received, though it is more extensive

than originally contemplated. It embraces a portion of the Government House Parel Estate and is bounded on the West by the Suparibaug Road between which and the compound of the Parel Government House is a considerable area, mostly occupied by old bungalows with large compounds, which is in need of improvement and development. Besides providing a large area for the extension of the residential quarters of the City, this Scheme will enable the Suparibaug Road, which forms portion of the main arterial road of the City, to be suitably widened ; and the Scheme is extended northward to the limits of the Board's Scheme No. V, to enable the Dadar and Vincent Roads in that portion to be similarly widened. Thus, in combination with the Board's Schemes V and VI a wide road will be secured running North and South from Sion Causeway as far as the old Tramway Terminus at Parel. The Scheme is estimated to cost Rs. 89,53,900 gross including provision of Rs. 5,00,000 for chal construction, and the ultimate net cost to the City is estimated at Rs. 4,44,752.

During the year, Notification was published of the Bhatwadi Improvement Scheme and of a large Improvement Scheme, which has been named "The East Agripada Improvement Scheme" No. XXXII, and which includes four separate areas represented by the Municipal Commissioner under Section 23 of the Act, namely, Kalapani, Tankpakhadi, Madanpura and Guzribazar. The area comprised in this Scheme is 501,565 square yards and it includes a considerable area of vacant land, which is low-lying and swampy, and which it is most essential should be properly reclaimed and drained. The area dealt with is, in fact, about the worst now existing within

the limits of the City ; 96 per cent. of the population live in one-room tenements, and there is a considerable number living in cadjan huts.

'As must always be the case with 'Improvement' Schemes properly so called, this East Agripada Scheme entails a large lock-up of Capital, estimated at present at upwards of Rs. 47 lakhs, but the result will be the abolition of an area of peculiarly bad slum property traversed by putrid open drains, and comprising what is a filthy lake during the monsoon season and a foul swamp in the cold season."

In 1909, two years after notification, this Scheme was returned by Government for modification with the object of reducing its cost ; it's area has now been considerably reduced, and the modified scheme is shortly to be resubmitted to Government for sanction ; but in the three years' interval since notification the value of the land to be acquired has gone up from 19 to 27 lakhs.

1908-09.

In the Board's 10th year 1908-09 the following works were completed :—

(1) All the roads and footpaths in Scheme II (Princess Street) including Lohar Chal Street.

(2) The portion of Sandhurst Road between Queen's Road and Falkland Road, except pavement.

(3) Roads in Scheme IV (Gamdevi Estate) (practically completed).

Hughes Road was opened to traffic on 22nd September 1908.

(4) Roads in Mandvi-Koliwada, with exception of Jamli Street and paving of footpaths.

(5) Duncan Road Police Accommodation (Scheme XVII) in November 1908.

(6) Police Accommodation Agripada (Scheme XIX) with the exception of certain additional items outside the estimate required by Government.

(7) Most of the roads in Hornby Road Estate (Scheme XXII).

(8) Police Accommodation Connaught Road Estate (Scheme XXIII).

(9) Chal in Princess Street for 224 people.

(10) Two additional blocks of chals at Imamwada for 990 people.

The chals at Mandvi-Koliwada and 6 new blocks at Agripada were commenced towards the end of the year. The New Queen's Road and the section of Sandhurst Road between Duncan Road and Parel Road and the Princess Street Police Accommodation Scheme were also commenced in 1908-09.

Thirty-seven plots were leased during the year including seven on Agripada Estate, eight on Princess Street and nine on Gamdevi Estate.

The following Schemes, which were notified in 1907-08, were sanctioned by Government during 1908-09 :—

(1) Bhatwadi Improvement Scheme (Scheme XXXIII) estimated to cost 4½ lakhs, (Government Resolution No. 3612, dated 16th May 1908). This is a Scheme for demolition and reconstruction on an insanitary area of 8,182 square yards represented by the Commissioner under Section 24 on 29th August 1907. Under this Scheme 6,110 square yards will be laid out in building sites, the remaining 2,072 square yards being given up for roads and service passages.

(2) Second alteration of Scheme III (Sandhurst Road), raising the estimated cost of this

Scheme from 88 to 111½ lakhs and the area from 195,097 square yards to 258,491 square yards, of which only 128,453 square yards will be put into building sites, the remainder being absorbed in roads, service passages, open spaces, &c.

The following Schemes were notified and sanctioned by Government during the year:—

(1) 2nd alteration of Scheme I (1st Nagpada), Government Resolution No. 1448, dated 17th March 1909. The effect of this alteration is merely to take into the Scheme a temple which was previously excluded. The cost, Rs. 8,007, is to be met from savings on the original estimate.

(2) 1st alteration of Scheme XXVII (Mathew Road) raising the estimated cost of this Scheme from 12 to 13½ lakhs. The effect of this was to straighten the New Queen's Road out and make it 80′ broad instead of 60′ as originally proposed.

Besides the above the following Schemes were notified during the year :—

(1) Gamdevi Police Accommodation Scheme (Scheme XXV), estimated to cost Rs. 3,62,096, provides accommodation for 5 Officers and 105 men with their families.

(2) Chunam Kiln Road Police Accommodation Scheme (Scheme XXXIV), estimated to cost Rs. 3,47,902, provides accommodation for 6 Officers and 104 men with their families.

(3) Falkland Road Police Accommodation Scheme (Scheme XXXV), estimated to cost Rs. 86,500, provides accommodation for 2 Officers with their families.

(4) Widening of Chunam Kiln Road (Scheme XXXVI), estimated to cost Rs. 3,47,435, substitutes for a narrow, winding lane a road 80′ broad between Gilder Street and Sandhurst Road.

With the close of 1908-09 came the close of the first stage contemplated by the Act in the Trust's financial career. Broadly the Act contemplated that the Trust should be aided by grants of land from Government and the Municipality and an annual cash contribution from the Municipality. The Trust were to develop the land and enjoy what rents they could make out of it for 99 years. Up to 31st March 1908 they were to pay nothing for the land ; but from 1st April 1908 a charge of 3 per cent. on its original value was to accrue and become payable annually on 1st April of 1909 and subsequent years. The Municipal contribution, though annually limited to 2 per cent. on Municipal assessments, was to be ultimately limited to what the Trust required in addition to their other resources, in order to meet Interest and Sinking Fund charges. Up to the end of 1908-09 there was to be no settlement ; but then and at the end of each subsequent year, so much of the Municipality's cash contribution to date as was in excess of the balance of the Interest and Sinking Fund charges, remaining after all the other Trust's resources were exhausted, was, after deduction of a comparatively small amount, representing Government's share in the profits, to be refunded to the Municipality. The Trust are never to be allowed to make any profit out of their operations. Henceforth any profit found at the end of any year is to be divided between the Municipality and Government.

This most unfortunate arrangement has resulted in the Trust's being deprived of the whole of the Reserve

Fund of 17¾ lakhs, which had been gradually accumulated from the profits of the first 10 years. Out of the 33½ lakhs contributed to the Trust by the Municipality in the 9 years 1900-09 (they had nothing to pay in 1899-1900) just under one-half has been paid back out of profits, leaving the City's contribution to the Trust in its first 10 years a little under 17 lakhs, *i. e.*, nearly 41 lakhs less than the Trust would have received, had the Municipal contribution been fixed as in Calcutta at 2 per cent. on Municipal assessments. Out of the City's contribution of 17 lakhs, the Trust spent over 10½ lakhs in Capital expenditure on improvement of the Municipal lands vested in the Trust (Agripada and Connaught Road Estates). This leaves the nett contribution in the first 10 years at 6½ lakhs only; but even the gross contribution works out to an average of less than 1¾ lakhs per annum as the Trust's share of the General Tax receipts, which averaged nearly 30 lakhs per annum, though the assessment rate was gradually reduced from 12½ to 8⅜ per cent. during the 10 years. The ratepayers of the future will not be so lucky as those of the Trust's first 10 years; for they will have to pay the Trust the full 2 per cent. on Municipal assessment, *i. e.*, from 8 to 10 lakhs per annum for many years to come.

Financial Position in 1909-10.

In the Trust's 11th year, then, the Municipal contribution had reached the maximum, and therefore no great expansion of Trust revenue could be looked for under that head. At the same time the Trust had lost their reserve fund, and incurred a fresh annual liability to the extent of 1½ lakhs as interest on the value of Government and Municipal lands vested in them. They had got only about halfway in the execution of their then sanctioned programme, and they had before them a

Government Resolution in which Government, in setting out their views as to the lines on which the future development of Bombay City should proceed, had marked out for the Trust a very large and costly expansion of their programme. In these circumstances, it was obviously necessary that there should be a very thorough inquiry into the Trust's finances, to see how far their assured revenues would go towards financing their sanctioned programme and permitting of its expansion. This inquiry has now been completed, and it shows that, on a most moderate estimate of future revenues, the Trust's financial position, in regard to its sanctioned programme, is absolutely sound. The future revenues will amply suffice for paying off interest and Sinking Fund charges on the loans required for the completion of sanctioned schemes ; but the margin for expansion of the programme is small. The Trust cannot undertake new works involving an ultimate loss of more than 16 lakhs unless their resources are correspondingly increased. At this juncture, it is fortunate for us ratepayers of Bombay that we have in Sir George Clarke a sympathetic Governor, who realises the difficulties of our position, and has set his heart on the early development and improvement of our City, and we may be sure that he will leave no stone unturned to secure for Bombay from the Government of India the same measure of assistance as has been recently given to the sister City of Calcutta. If the taxpayers' contribution to the improvement of Bombay is made even half of what Calcutta is to get, the Trust will be able to expand their improvement programme to the full extent contemplated by the Bombay Government in their Resolution No. 3022 of 14th June 1909 on the development of Bombay.

In this lecture I have given you a summary of the Trust's work in the past up to the end of 1908-09. The

history of 1909-10 you can read in the copy of the Trust's last annual report, which was recently sent to you, and when the result of our Government's negotiations with the Government of India for the amplification of the Trust's resources is known, I shall be in a position to tell you, if you like, something of the Trust's programme for the future and indicate what an important part architects, surveyors and builders can play in making our City, the gate of India, fully worthy of the name "Bombay the Beautiful."

THE
BOMBAY CITY IMPROVEMENT TRUST

99080

A LECTURE

DELIVERED BY

G. OWEN DUNN Esq.,

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOMBAY IMPROVEMENT TRUST

AT THE

HEALTH SECTION

OF

THE BOMBAY INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION

IN

JANUARY 1905.

FORT PRINTING PRESS,
FORT, BOMBAY.

With Mr. Dunn's kind consent, this lecture has been printed with a view to meeting to some extent the demand for information as to why the Bombay City Improvement Trust was created and what it has done.

The footnotes are to be read as of the date of this slip.

J. P. ORR,
CHAIRMAN,
BOMBAY CITY IMPROVEMENT TRUST.

31st March 1913.

A Lecture delivered at the Health Section of the Bombay Industrial Exhibition in January 1905 by G. Owen Dunn, Esq., Chairman of the Bombay City Improvement Trust

---

A Local Rhymster, a few weeks ago, in one of our Local Papers, referring to the little difference of opinion between the "Sind Gazette" and the "Times of India" as regards the importance of Karachi, took the occasion for a hit at the Bombay Improvement Trust by putting the following lines into the mouth of a Karachi advocate :—

> "We may not have a Ballard Pier and Passengers galore,
>
> "We may not have a 'Taj Mahal' upon our sandy shore,
>
> "We may not have to live in an Apollo Bunder Flat,
>
> "But we haven't an Improvement Trust and thank the Lord for that!

Now I do not in the least object to pleasantries of this kind, and indeed can laugh at them with the rest. A Public Body like the Trust is fair game. But it would be interesting to know why,

in the opinion of this doggrel Rhymster, the absence of an Improvement Trust is such a matter for thankfulness, how much he knows about it, and how far the operations of the Improvement Trust in this City have affected him. I imagine he must be one of several cavillers whose objection is mainly to the Building operations on the Wellington Lines, the fact that the Marine Lines Bungalows are not exclusively reserved for Europeans, the closing of the Kennedy Sea Face Ride during the monsoon or some little difficulty of access to the sands for their morning Ride, and who fail to appreciate some of the efforts of our Local Architects. I think I shall be fairly safe if I assume that he knows practically nothing of Bombay beyond the Esplanade and portions of the Fort, except perhaps the neighbourhood of Mahaluxmi, and that what he does know is derived from the disagreeable necessity of traversing certain parts of the Town if he wants to get from his Apollo Bunder Flat to (shall I say ?) the Byculla Club. I do not suppose he has ever seen the Bombay Improvement Trust Act or has any real ideas of his own on the subject.

It was in the hope that I might be of some little assistance in giving to irresponsible Critics of this kind and also to such of the Native Community as may be interested but not informed on this subject a general idea of the objects, methods and work of the Trust that I accepted the suggestion

of our energetic Honorary Secretary, Dr. Turner, to deliver a Lecture here one afternoon while the opportunity afforded by this Exhibition was still available.

It must have occurred to any thoughtful person who has penetrated some of the Back-lanes and generally unvisited quarters of the City, even if he be ignorant of the first principles of Sanitation, that the conditions under which the vast majority of the poorer people in this City live are unwholesome and demoralising in the extreme. The wonder is not that the general death rate is exceedingly high, the Infant mortality terrible, and Plague so prevalent, but that so many human beings manage to exist at all, and that the ravages of disease and pestilence are not far greater. In many quarters the houses are jammed so closely together that free circulation of air is prevented, the Sun can barely get lower down than the roofs and the atmosphere is thick with foul odours. There are no proper roads, only narrow tortuous lanes and passages and horrible Gullies, and the older houses have generally been built without any regard to light and air, and too often in a style which would make even the most incorrigible English Jerry-Builder blush. There are hundreds of houses of design similar to the Model which is to be seen in the Improvement Trust Exhibit close by, and to which I would call special attention, in which most of the rooms have no opening

at all except the door-way leading into a dark foulsmelling passage, and where artificial light is necessary all day long while the glorious sun-light floods the street perhaps only a few yards distant.

It was with the object of correcting this terrible state of things that the Bombay Improvement Trust was constituted. It will not unnaturally be asked "How is it that such a state of things was ever allowed to come into existence?" A glance at the Map of Bombay will show that the Railways, the Docks, the older mills, and the business quarter of the Town are all crowded together in the narrowest part of the Island, and it is only natural that those whose daily avocations are in this neighbourhood should desire to live as close as possible to their work. They cannot afford Tram and Train fares, and they have thus established their homes within this restricted area. This class of people is essentially gregarious, and those who have come from outside to swell the population of the City, attracted by the employment available with the increased trade of the Port and in the numerous mills which have sprung up, have crowded in with their co-religionists and caste fellows, and the fortunate owners of properties in this neighbourhood have not been slow to make the most out of the enormous demand for accommodation due to this state of things.

Under the Municipal Act of 1888 and the Bye-laws which have been in force since 1892, the construction of such houses as those I have mentioned is no longer possible, but the Regulations are still most inadequate. It is only necessary for a 5′ wide space to be left between blocks of Chauls (or one room tenement houses) and thus the crowding together of houses can be almost as bad as before. These inadequate Bye-laws, and they are inadequate in more ways than this, urgently call for amendment. Revised *Bye-laws are, I believe, under consideration and the Local Press would do good service were they, through their columns, to endeavour to educate public opinion to a proper appreciation of what is necessary to ensure to the poorer classes more decent and healthier homes.

The work of the Bombay Improvement Trust may be divided into : *firstly*, the improvement ' *en bloc* ' of areas declared to be insanitary and incapable of any less drastic measure, *secondly*, the creation of new Streets for the purpose of affording efficient ventilation to the more crowded parts of the City and of increasing and improving the means of inter-communication, *thirdly*, the improvement and development of available areas in the Island and the reclaiming of land from the Sea to provide Building-sites for the expansion of the City,

* The Revised Bye-Laws came into force on 24th March 1910 and the question of further improving them in respect of the lighting and ventilation of dwellings is under consideration.

fourthly, in connection with the foregoing, the provision of sanitary accommodation for the poorer and working classes who are displaced by those operations, and *fifthly*, also in connection with Street and Improvement Schemes, accommodation for the Police, a matter calling for urgent attention both on the score of the efficiency of the Force and as indirectly affecting the question of decent housing for the poor and the prevention of overcrowding in the City.

All this of course means a vast expenditure of money, and it will naturally be asked where this money comes from. Well, in order to enable the Board to obtain it, Government and the Corporation have made over to the Trust all their vacant lands with a view to their development so that the Trust may receive from them an annual income in the shape of ground rents. This income is supplemented by an* annual Contribution from the Municipality, *limited as required by the Act, to 2 % on the rateable value of the City, and with an income thus secured the Trust are able to place Loans in the open Market, the extent of their borrowing powers being of course dependent upon the amount they are in a position to pay for interest and sinking funds. As ground rents accrue from the building sites which the Improvements and Street Schemes will make available, their

* By Bombay Act No. I of 1913 the full 2 per cent is made payable to the Trust annually.

powers of borrowing will increase so that fresh Schemes can be undertaken.

The Trust aims at the sanitary improvement of the City *firstly* on general lines by means of the Schemes for improvement of areas and for new Streets, and *secondly* by the particular application of Sanitary Principles to the new Buildings to be erected on lands which are vested in or are acquired by them, by means of special Building Regulations and Restrictions, the main principle throughout being to ensure a sufficiency of light and air to every street, every house and every room.

With this object, the Board requires first of all that only a certain proportion of each building plot shall be covered with buildings, the rest being left as open space for ventilation. Then they require that Plans of every building to be erected shall be submitted for their approval in order to see that their regulations are observed, and no alteration is allowed in approved Plans unless the alteration is similarly approved. The Regulations require that the whole of at least one side of every room shall face a street or sufficient open space, that no room intended for habitation shall be less than 10 feet clear in height or less than 80 sq. feet* in area, that every room shall be ventilated directly into the open air and shall be provided with door and window open-

*Now increased to 100 square feet.

ings aggregating in area not less than ¼ of the floor area of the room, and further that of this total area of the windows and grated openings alone shall not be less than 1/10 of the floor area. They provide a limitation to the height of houses based on the width of the street or open space adjoining, so that no house shall unduly obstruct the light and air required by others, they prohibit earthen floors and flimsy partition walls, they insist upon efficient drainage and there are stringent regulations as regards water closets

The portion of the Board's operations which is most patent to the eye of the critic who indulges most in attacks on the Trust in the Newspapers is the development of the lands vested by Government in the Board and from which the Board derive a portion of the means whereby they are enabled to carry out the more essential part of their work in the City, and I may mention here that it was always the intention of Government that these lands should be built upon. As long ago as 1883, an influential Committee was appointed by Government to report upon the extension of Bombay, and the appropriation of the vacant land on the Wellington Lines and the Wodehouse Road as well as the whole of the Marine Lines Maidan for building purposes was then contemplated, and reclamations were recommended. The Constitution of the Trust, therefore, has merely carried into effect more rapidly than would otherwise have been the case the inten-

tions of Government, but the Trust has rescued the Marine Lines Maidan from the builder and has dedicated it for ever to the Public. The lands vested in the Trust by the Corporation are also being developed, but as these lands are notsituated in the neighbourhood of the Esplanade the Public hear little or nothing about them. All this part of the work of the Trust however is only incidental and in a measure preliminary to the larger and more important work of improving matters in the Native Town to which part of the subject I will now more particularly refer.

The improvement 'en bloc' of considerable insanitary areas is perhaps the most important part of the Board's operations, and hitherto two such areas have been taken up as 'Improvement Schemes' properly so-called, though portions of several others are also dealt with in two of the large Street Schemes. The Improvement Schemes in question are those of the First Nagpada District and Mandvi-Koliwada. The former of these comprises about 75,000 square yards of one of the worst slum areas in Bombay where the death-rate was over 40 before the Plague began and subsequently increased to over 60. This area has been entirely cleared and laid out afresh with wide Roads. All the new Building plots have been leased out on conditions as regards building which ensure thorough sanitary conditions, and to a great extent the area has been already reconstructed

If persons interested in the Trust, and particularly its irresponsible Critics, will only go and see what has been done in that area, they will have some idea not only of what the objects of the Trust are, but of how they are being carried out. Those who did not know the area in former times will not be able to fully appreciate this; but I would ask them to study the 2 models of this Scheme which form part of the Trust Exhibit here and which show the difference as regards the arrangement of houses, though it can convey no idea of the terrible conditions of darkness and filth which used to prevail. The area known as Mandvi Koliwada is where Plague was first detected in 1896 and where it has persistently remained ever since. The area notified for improvement in this case is 36,000 sq. yards. Most of the properties have now been acquired, and in due course will be demolished. Wide Streets will take the place of the present narrow lanes and passages, and buildings constructed on sanitary principles will occupy the frontages.* Other portions of the City will be taken up by degrees and be treated in the same manner, the Scheme of Roads being so arranged in each case as to fit in with a general Scheme for the neighbourhood, and with the ultimate requirements of the City as a whole.

---

*This scheme is now practically complete (1913).

The one example of the Trust's work in the direction of new Streets which can now be seen by those who care to go and look is that* under construction between the Queens Road and Carnac Bridge, and I think that no one can see that work even in its present incomplete condition, without realizing the enormous benefit that it will confer on the Southern portion of the Native Town by forming a funnel down which the fresh westerly breeze will penetrate. Few, if any, Europeans and probably only those Natives who lived in or had business in the Locality know what Chandanwadi was like before it was cleared away; but here again I would ask them to examine the Models of this Scheme II which are on view in the Trust Exhibit, where also can be seen the Plans of the other large Street Scheme† mentioned which will clear out considerable portions of the terribly overbuilt and insanitary areas in Kumbarwada, Umarkhadi, Mahomedkhan Pakadi, Old Nagpada and Nawroji Hill and will give a clear passage to the air from Back Bay to the Elphinstone Bridge. Both these Schemes, when completed, should be handsome thoroughfares adding not only to the health but to the beauty of the City.

The Trust has also on hand Schemes for Streets designed not so-much for the sanitary improvement

*Now known as Princess Street; opened by Their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales on November 10th 1905.

† Now called Sandhurst Road.

of inhabited areas as for the provision of Building sites which will enable the people to spread out over a larger area. These schemes generally involve extensive filling in of low lying land to provide for proper drainage, in addition to the construction of roads and the necessary draining, sewering and lighting. Such are the Schemes for Suburbs in the neighbourhood of Dadar and Matunga, the Scheme for providing building sites in the neighbourhood of the Mills, and the Scheme* for opening up the area lying between Chaupati and the Gowalia Tank Road. We hope shortly to begin actual work in this direction, most of the properties in connection with this latter Scheme having now been acquired. All classes of the community are being catered for, the poor, the middle classes, and the well-to-do.

The Reclamation carried out near the Wodehouse Bridge will doubtless be popular for high class residences and should be profitable to the Trust, thereby increasing its resources for its work in the Native Town.

Of Police accommodation Schemes an extensive one is approaching completion on the Wodehouse Road Estate, which provides 228 rooms for police sepoys and accommodation for officers and chief constables with subsidiary buildings. Another with 63 rooms and officers Quarters etc. will soon be completed in the Improved Nagpada area and

*Hughes Road and Gamdevi.

others have been either commenced or are about to be begun at Agripada, Shepherd Road, Connaught Road, and Duncan Road, while several more are to follow.

It would be an endless matter for me to attempt to describe the great difficulties which the Trust has had to face and which have been responsible for such delay as has occurred in the carrying out of the Notified Schemes in the City. One of the principal of these however is the vast question of housing the people who are displaced by the necessary demolitions. The problem we have to face is to provide sanitary accommodation suitable to the requirements of the people at rents which the people can afford to pay, and to do this with a reasonable margin of profit. The Board has to borrow money for these operations at 4 per cent and it is clear that if the net return from Housing Schemes be less than this, the transaction is a dead loss to the Trust. Up to now we have not been able to make the account balance, but we are still striving, by every possible means, to reduce the cost of construction while maintaining the sanitary standard which we have adopted. Until we can show that housing on such lines can be made to pay a fair percentage, we can do no more than touch the fringe of this matter. The task of housing say Three or Four Hundred Thousand people is beyond the capacity of any one Body, and it is thus of vital

importance that we should be able to show to the Capitalist and to the large employers of labour that it can be done on a commercial basis. Meanwhile we have to face some loss, and including accommodation already built and occupied we shall shortly have available quarters, including those for the Police, for from Five to Six Thousand people, and within the next two years we hope to have provided for at least Nine or Ten Thousand more, making in all fourteen or fifteen Thousand persons provided for which though not an unsubstantial figure represents possibly less than 1/20th of what is really required.

The style of construction, with everything of the best quality, which the Trust adopt, and which as a Public Body they must adopt, is superior to that which a private speculator would consider to be adequate to the purpose, and our out goings for repairs and supervision are beyond what the speculator would incur. If, then, we can show that we can clear over 4% I think a speculator might fairly expect that with the same design and covering the same ground he could secure at least 5% and possibly 6% even at the same rents, and I thus hope that when we can show a clear 4% for sanitary Chawls built on land valued at not more than Rs. 5 or 6 per square yard, in which rents per 100 square feet of floor area do not exceed Rs. 3 per mensem the private Capitalist and the 5% philanthropist will step in and take their share in the

vast work that must be accomplished in this direction before the death rate of Bombay can be reduced to a figure which will compare not unfavourably with the other great Cities of the world.

While upon this subject, I may refer to the great objection which has been taken to the Camp on the Kennedy Sea Face which has provided shelter for 1,500 or 1,600 persons during the last year. It may be of interest to you to know that the death rate in that Camp for the past year has been only 23 per 1000, so that the cry raised at one time in the Corporation as to insanitary conditions there, and the inhumanity of forcing the poor people to live in such places is shown to have been entirely baseless. As to forcing the people to live there the difficulty is to keep the accommodation for these who have been really displaced by our demolitions and to get those who have no such claims to go elsewhere. Without some such Camps I fail to see how sufficiently rapid progress can be made with the clearance of insanitary areas. I hope to be able shortly to substitute for these certainly unsightly quarters something of a more permanent and presentable character which would be capable of removal from place to place as required, and I hope that by the provision of a sufficient number of such moveable semi-permanent*

*The system of semi-permanent ranges of huts was shortly afterwards adopted and has been largely used for the temporary accommodation of people displaced by the Trust's operations.

ranges of huts we shall be able to make much more visible progress in the future than has been possible in the past. We have obtained possession of properties which, could we only solve this housing difficulty, would permit of great progress being speedily made; but I must ask the public to be patient, to endeavour to realise the enormous difficulties that have to be overcome and to believe in our earnest desire to see the Schemes which are already in hand brought to completion and be able to deal with other parts of the City which urgently call for Improvement.

It may be of interest, before I conclude this necessarily imperfect sketch of the Trust's work, if I refer to the question of the acquisition of properties. It has been asserted in some quarters that owners of notified properties are inadequately compensated, and that the Board's offers are illiberal. Now I may say at once that except in the case of amicable arrangements the Board have nothing to say as to the amount of compensation. They merely have to pay, and their feeling is that in very many cases at least they have to pay a great deal too much. Government have placed a special Collector on duty for the sole purpose of acquiring these properties under the Land Acquisition Act. We have now in fact two Special Collectors engaged on this work and it is only after a full hearing of both sides at which both parties can be and are represented by expert legal and technical advisers,

and after examination of books and records, and inspection of the property in question that the Collector makes his award which the Trust has promptly to pay. If the claimant is dissatisfied he can refer to a special Tribunal of Appeal constituted for the purpose, and can fight his case over again before an experienced legal President and two expert valuers sitting as Assessors. This Tribunal cannot decrease the Collector's award, they can only confirm it or increase it, so the Trust can gain nothing in these appeals and the claimant cannot lose except in costs, while if the award is increased by even Rs. 10 the costs all fall on the Trust. The claimant has even yet an appeal to the High Court, if the Tribunal does not satisfy him, so it cannot be said that the machinery for ensuring fair compensation is inadequate. And as to the illiberal offers of the Trust I may state that of 999 cases already settled 330 have been settled amicably, 645 by the Collector and 24 by the Tribunal i.e. roughly $\frac{1}{3}$rd of the acquired properties have been amicably arranged between the Trust and the owners. I think I need say no more on that subject, except to express a hope that the proportion of amicable settlements may increase as time goes on

I have been able in the time at my disposal to touch only on the broad aspects of the Trust's work. Were I to attempt to go into greater detail or to take you into confidence as regards the difficulties

and troubles with lawyers, lessees, architects, owners of properties, tenants, contractors, and others the pitfalls of the Act, the financial questions involved, the relations of the Board with the Corporation and Government, and so on, I should want many hours and should soon be talking to empty chairs. I hope however that the sketch I have attempted has given some of you at least information of interest and that it may assist in some small degree to obtain for the Trust a larger measure of sympathetic appreciation than hitherto.

'T is not in mortals to command success' but at all events the Trustees for the Improvement of the City of Bombay are endeavouring earnestly to deserve it.

00099080

Digitized with financial assistance from
Shri Brihad Bhartiya Samaj
on 11 March, 2020